

# Rev. 22:2. the Tree With Its Twelve Harvests

by Horatius Bonar

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*The sermon explores the symbolic significance of the tree of life, the river, and the city in Revelation 22:2, emphasizing eternal nourishment and healing through Christ.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 36:8, Psalm 46:4, Isaiah 33:21, Isaiah 61:3, Ezekiel 47:1, Acts 5:15, Acts 19:12, 1 Corinthians 15:44, Revelation 22:2

**Topics:** "Eternal Life", "Healing in Christ"

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## Description

Horatius Bonar preaches on Revelation 22:2, illustrating the beauty and perfection of the new creation, where the tree of life flourishes in the new Jerusalem, bearing twelve kinds of fruit and providing healing for the nations. He emphasizes the significance of faith and hope in this glorious vision, where the city and paradise coexist, and the river of life flows abundantly. Bonar describes the tree of life as a source of eternal nourishment and healing, symbolizing Christ as the ultimate source of all blessings. He invites believers to partake in the life-giving fruit and healing leaves, encouraging them to seek the refreshment and sustenance found in Christ. The sermon highlights the contrast between the fleeting nature of the present world and the eternal glory awaiting the faithful.

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## Transcript

"In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month--and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."--Revelation 22:2.

Faith looks into the unseen past, hope into the unseen future. The 'things hoped for' are very glorious. Eye has not seen them, nor ear heard them; but 'God has revealed (the name of this book is the "Revelation") them unto us by His Spirit.' That Spirit has given us (1) eyes to see; (2) objects to look upon; and (3) light to see them with.

It is the glory of the new creation, and specially of the new Jerusalem, that is here described. It is no longer, as at first, Paradise alone without a city, and with only our first parents to inhabit it; nor is it Jerusalem alone without Paradise, and without a river, and without a tree of life. It is Paradise, and Jerusalem together. The city is in the garden, and the garden in the city; the tree of life springing up in fruit-bearing beauty, and the bright river flowing through the street and under the shade of the trees. Nor is this Paradise without its 'Adam,' nor this city without its Solomon. The second Adam is here, the Lord from heaven. The throne of God and of the Lamb is here. All is heavenly, yet all is earthly too; all is divine, yet

all is human. There is perfection everywhere--there is glory over all. It is the perfection of the material and visible, as well as of the spiritual and invisible. Creation has reached its summit--the eternally predestined height from which it cannot fall.

Into the regions of this glory we would seek to enter now. Time is fleeting. The world passes away. Our life is but a vapor. This present world is a waste, howling wilderness. Darkness and clouds are here. The ice and frost, the blast, the storm, the earthquake are here. Night, and death, and the curse, and the grave are here. We eagerly look beyond these, and anticipate the promised perfection and blessedness of the new creation.

I. The STREET of the city. The word refers to the main or broad street of the city. A wide central street, in the midst of which the river flowed, is the picture here. It is the great street of a well-built city--the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The city is the 'heavenly Jerusalem,' the 'holy city,' of which we become citizens even now in believing, so that 'our citizenship is in heaven,' and we, 'are come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God,' realizing ourselves as already in the city, and the city as already here. That glorious city is to be the eternal center of the universe, the seat of government, and the center of social life and blessed being. We need not try to sketch the city and its street, nor to answer the question, Is all this to be real and material, or is it only spiritual? Spiritual certainly, in the sense in which our resurrection bodies are to be (1 Corinthians 15:44), but still real and material; for the gold and gems, the walls, and foundations, and gates, are evidently given to indicate something material, corresponding to all these, and which could only be represented to us by these. This 'street,' or great thoroughfare of the celestial city, suggests to us all that a similar street in any of our great cities now calls up to view. It is the place of concourse; the place of fellowship; the place of splendor; the head and heart of the city--that city which is to be the metropolis of the universe, as the lower Jerusalem is the metropolis of earth.

II. The RIVER of the city. This is described in the previous verse. It is like, and yet unlike, all earthly streams. Its source is divine; its waters are bright; its flow is endless. Jordan, and Nile, and Euphrates cannot be compared to it. This magnificent river flows right through the center of the street, which is in the center of the city, dividing it into two, so that the whole city equally gets the benefit of its waters. It distributes on both sides its heavenly blessing as it pours along, carrying on its fair bosom refreshment, and gladness, and beauty. 'Well-watered' is this city; and with provisions for every beneficent purpose. It is 'the river, the streams of which make glad the city of our God' (Psalm 46:4); it is the river of peace, for on it 'shall go no war ship, neither shall mighty ship pass thereby' (Isaiah 33:21). It contains in it all physical blessings which a river can contain, and it is the symbol of all spiritual blessings. 'You shall make them drink of the river of Your pleasures' (Psalm 36:8). Not from any earthly source does this river flow; not even from the rock of the desert; not from the sanctuary (Ezekiel 47:1); not from the eternal hills--but from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

III. The tree of life. This carries us back to Paradise, with its unfallen glory. It is the 'tree of righteousness' (Isaiah 61:3); the 'plant of renown' (Ezekiel 34:29); the tree of the old creation, and the tree of the new; the living and life-giving tree. There is the earthly tree and the heavenly tree, just as there is the earthly and the heavenly Jerusalem; the tree of the lower Paradise, and the tree of the upper Paradise; but the glory of the terrestrial is one, and the glory of the celestial is another. Here we have the celestial; and yet, when we read this chapter in connection with the forty-eighth of Ezekiel, we see that the two are connected the one with the other--like the upper and the nether springs; like the higher and the lower stories of the great palace; like the outer and the inner courts of the great temple. This tree of life lines the river of life; extending like a fringe along its margin on both sides, between it and the street; shooting up like a long

avenue of palms in the midst of the broad street, through the center of which the river flowed. A wondrous tree; or rather a forest of wondrous trees pleasant to the eye, good for fruit, and excellent for shade and fragrance, under whose shadow we shall sit down with great delight, in the day when the tabernacle of God is with men.

IV. The FRUIT of the tree. It is 'good for fruit.' Take it either physically or spiritually, it is so. Take it in both ways--referring to both body and soul--the food of our risen life, the sustenance of our risen bodies and perfected souls, it is 'good'--it is 'very good.' It nourishes and cherishes. It imparts and sustains the incorruptible life. It communicates its celestial properties to the whole being of the redeemed--body, soul, and spirit. It bears twelve kinds of fruits, or rather 'twelve fruits'--that is, harvests or crops. Like the orange tree among us now, it is always blossoming, and always bearing. The revolving year is one perpetual harvest, every month producing new fruit. The description of the 'celestial' is very like that of the 'terrestrial' in Ezekiel, which runs thus--'many trees were now growing on both sides of the river! All kinds of fruit trees will grow along both sides of the river. The leaves of these trees will never turn brown and fall, and there will always be fruit on their branches. There will be a new crop every month, without fail! For they are watered by the river flowing from the Temple. The fruit will be for food and the leaves for healing.' (Ezekiel 47:7, 12). Here then is the food of the redeemed--eternal nourishment, suited to their redeemed being! Here is perpetual spring, perpetual summer, perpetual autumn--no winter, no withering, no famine, no decay! Life for eternity, sustained by the fruit of the live-giving tree, which shall nourish all the parts and powers, mental and material, of our everlasting and incorruptible nature!

V. The LEAVES of the tree. These are for health. As the fruit is for food to the celestial dwellers, so the leaves are for healing. It may be also that these leaves are needful for the preservation of health. In any case, we see the meaning of the words, 'The leaves of the tree are for the healing (or health) of the nations.'

All this is beyond doubt connected with the Lord Jesus Christ--'the Lamb as it had been slain;' for as every infliction of the curse here or hereafter is connected with Him as such, so every part of present and future blessing is linked with Him. We might in this aspect say, Jesus is the river, He is the tree, He is the fruit, He is the healing leaf. But perhaps it is more correct to say, He is the fountainhead of all blessing in heaven and earth, in this world and in that which is to come; and these material things are the channels through which He pours out His fullness.

(1.) The bright and refreshing river. Weary man of earth, come here. There are waters for you, enough and to spare. All free and all accessible. 'Come to the waters;' 'let him who is athirst come;' 'I will give to him who is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely;' not merely of the 'water' or of the 'river,' but of the 'fountain,' 'the spring shut up, the fountain sealed.'

(2.) The plenteous and life-giving fruit. It is the 'bread of life;' it is better than angels' food. It is the hidden manna; the fruit of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God. Eat, for it is the nourishment you need; eat, for it is free and within your reach; eat, for it is living and life-giving food. You will find it sweet to your taste. It confers immortality on the eater. He who eats of this fruit shall live forever.

(3.) The healing leaf. We cannot say of this tree, 'Nothing but leaves;' still there are leaves in abundance, and each leaf is precious. It is like the hem of Christ's garment, through which healing came to all who touched it. It is like 'the handkerchiefs and aprons' from Paul's body that healed the sick (Acts 19:12); or like 'the shadow of Peter passing-by' (Acts 5:15) that 'over shadowed' and healed the sick of Jerusalem.

These were healings for the body. In like manner there come healings for the soul. Christ is the healer of a sick world. The simplest touch in any part heals. Will you be made whole? Take a leaf from the healing tree. Are you sick again? Take another and another. Take them every hour!

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